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FAR EAST

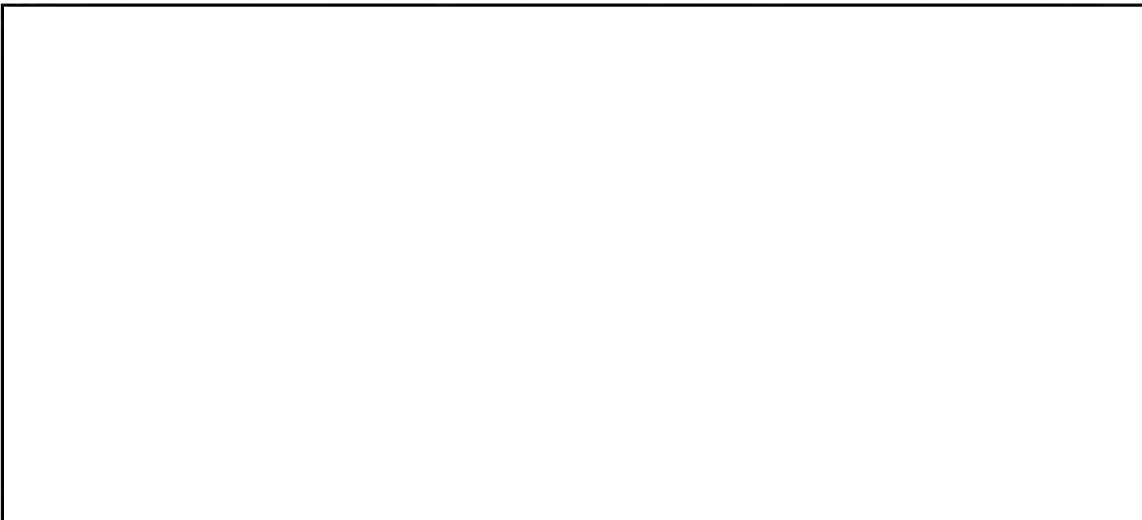
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SOVIET UNION

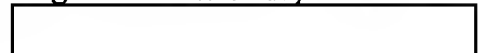
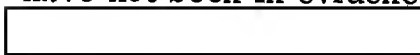
1. New large-caliber field guns observed in Moscow:



The American army attaché in Moscow reports that a new model Soviet field gun was observed on 12 April in what appeared to be a rehearsal for the annual May Day parade. The new weapon is estimated to be of 240mm caliber, with a barrel length of 30 to 34 feet. It is mounted on a carriage with four dual wheels, towed by a new, heavy prime mover.

Comment: The USSR is considered capable of having a nuclear projectile by mid-1955 which could be fired from a gun of this caliber, but such a projectile is not believed to have been tested as yet.

The new gun appears to be larger than any field gun previously used by the Soviet army, although howitzers up to 305mm have been employed. Czech-made 210mm guns, with a barrel length of approximately 33 feet and range up to 20 miles, were used by the Soviet army during World War II, but have not been in evidence in recent years.



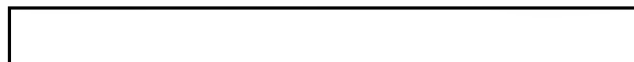
FAR EAST

2. Hatoyama reported willing to resign:



The American embassy in Tokyo reports that Prime Minister Hatoyama may be ready to retire if necessary to bring about conservative unity. The embassy believes that the 12 April statement to this effect by Bukichi Miki, a key official in Japan's Democratic Party, was made with the prior knowledge of Hatoyama and may have been a serious offer to facilitate a merger with the Liberals.

Several other persons close to Hatoyama report the prime minister is prepared to turn his office over to



Liberal Party president Taketora Ogata if satisfactory terms can be arranged.

Comment: The government is expected to face bitter attacks during the current Diet session, and the Democratic offer could be intended to soften Liberal criticism.

Hatoyama may feel that his popularity is on the wane, and success in bringing about a conservative merger would enable him to retire with honor. While many Democrats as well as Liberals would support an Ogata-led coalition, it is unlikely that a complete merger of conservative forces can be effected.

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

3. Comment on situation in Syria:

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Reports from Damascus and Baghdad indicate that neither a coup in Syria nor Iraqi military intervention is likely at this time, although the situation remains highly volatile.

The leftist, anti-Western forces supporting Syrian foreign minister Azm's pro-Egyptian policy apparently have for the time being gained the upper hand in their struggle with conservative forces.

Azm, who is backed by army chief of staff Shuqayr, the extremist Arab Socialist-Resurrectionist Party and the Communists, seems to have compelled the cabinet to approve plans for concluding a defense pact with Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Pro-Western Syrians apparently remain too factionalized to oppose Azm and his clique effectively.

Iraq, having failed to obtain Western approval, will not intervene militarily for the time being. However, Turkey believes that, in concert with Iraq and the West, it must take measures short of armed intervention to reverse the trend of events in Syria.



The situation is expected to remain quiet at least until after the Arab delegations arrive at the Afro-Asian conference. There, Syrian, Egyptian and Saudi Arabian officials will probably continue to discuss Cairo's projected pact, and Turkey expects them to sign it.

WESTERN EUROPE

4. Comment on results of Soviet-Austrian talks:

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The Soviet Union made several major concessions to the Austrians during the Moscow talks, while leaving vague the nature of its demands for four-power guarantees of Austrian independence and neutrality. Any new obstacles which Moscow might raise to a treaty in a conference would probably concern these guarantees and perhaps sanctions to enforce them.

Austria agreed not to join any military alliances or permit foreign bases on its territory. The Soviet Union had originally sought an Austrian pledge of "neutrality," but finally accepted an Austrian commitment to pursue "in relation to all states a policy of independence." The Soviet press chief, however, interpreted "independence" to mean political, economic, diplomatic, and military neutrality between East and West.

The Austrian press is enthusiastic over the results of the talks and the Austrians will be impatient to confirm their diplomatic success at a four-power conference. There will be considerable pressure against any Western attempt to delay a conference, particularly in view of the USSR's expressed willingness to discuss the Austrian treaty separate from the German question.

In Bonn, coalition politicians feel that the Soviet concessions on the Austrian treaty have been largely adopted for their impact on the West German people. These politicians fear that Western endorsement of an Austrian treaty based on

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neutrality would cause domestic neutralist sentiment to soar. Despite their fears, such a reaction in West Germany would probably be short-lived unless Moscow is also willing to yield its hold over East Germany through free elections.

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5. Faure insists on meeting on East-West talks before deposit of Paris accords:

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French premier Faure insisted to British minister Reilly on 14 April that in no event would he deposit the French instruments of ratification of the Paris treaties until a three-power working group had begun preparation for talks with the USSR. Ambassador Dillon believes this statement by Faure "must be considered seriously and not treated as a bluff."

Earlier on 14 April Faure had given Dillon an aide-memoire proposing a three-power working group meeting as soon as possible this month, with French deposit of the Paris treaties to follow on 7 May.

Comment: Faure maintains that in order to get Council of the Republic approval of the Paris agreements, he undertook a commitment to press for early East-West talks. It is probable, however, that his main concern is to leave the Mendes-France faction of the Radical Socialist Party no grounds for attacking his record as premier when the party congress is held on 4 May.

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